

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 500
By Windle

A RESOLUTION to designate a certain segment of State Route 52 in Morgan County as the "James 'Thomas' Brewster Memorial Highway".

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways and bridges to honor the memory of those exemplary citizens who during their lifetimes contributed significantly to the panoramic history and rich heritage of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, having obtained land grants for several hundred acres of land in the northwest corner of Morgan County, James "Thomas" Brewster, along with his wife, Mary, and his father, Preacher Johnny Brewster, settled land approximately two miles from the present Rugby community circa 1880, about the same time as Thomas Hughes was founding the Rugby Colony; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Brewster wore chin whiskers and bore a striking resemblance to "Uncle Sam"; he possessed a vast store of natural wisdom; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Brewster operated a ferry across the Clear Fork River between Morgan and Fentress Counties; and

WHEREAS, his wife, Mary, was also a picturesque character; she performed most of the farm work while her husband operated the ferry; and

WHEREAS, James “Thomas” and Mary Brewster’s progeny formed a settlement called Brewstertown, and many of their descendants still live in this area today; and

WHEREAS, Thomas is specifically mentioned in the autobiography of A.B. Wright, a Methodist preacher who founded A.B. Wright Institute in the Burrville community; Mr. Wright credits Mr. Brewster with saving his life on the Clear Fork River; and

WHEREAS, when a bridge was built across the Clear Fork River, Mr. Brewster closed his ferry operation; the new bridge was named the “Brewster Bridge” and retained that name for many years; and

WHEREAS, residents of Fentress County were subsequently successful in persuading this Body to rename the Brewster Bridge as a memorial to honor two fine Fentress County citizens; however, the map of Big South Fork still lists the bridge as the “Brewster Bridge”; and

WHEREAS, James “Thomas” Brewster was a pioneer settler who helped make Morgan County what it is today, and his many contributions to our history and heritage should not be forgotten; and

WHEREAS, because the old landmark honoring Mr. Brewster’s memory has been renamed, the Morgan County Commission has expressed a desire to name a segment of State Route 52 between the Rugby community and the old Brewster Bridge as a memorial to this courageous pioneer whose knowledge, wisdom and legacy of achievement still has much to offer our modern society; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly always endeavors to comply with the wishes of local governments on matters of local concern whenever it is feasible to do so; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That in commemoration of a gentleman who worked diligently and sacrificed personal comfort to build a community that still survives today and who is still respected and revered by his many descendants in Morgan County, the segment of State Route 52 in Morgan County from the

Rugby community to the formerly designated "Brewster Bridge" is hereby designated as the "James 'Thomas' Brewster Memorial Highway".

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Department of Transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers, including one sign or marker immediately adjacent to the Morgan County side of the former Brewster Bridge, designating such segment of State Route 52 as the "James 'Thomas' Brewster Memorial Highway".

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Commissioner of Transportation and to the Morgan County Commission.